

THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING COUNSELLING/TEACHING TOOLS TO PROMOTE RATIONAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - The present study was conducted in order to examine the need to develop counseling/teaching tools aimed at explaining the concept of ABCDE to clients or students. The counseling/teaching tools will connect the theoretical concepts of ABCDE to practical applications. Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) was developed by Albert Ellis in 1957 and is one of the well-known cognitive and behavioural approaches of counselling and psychotherapy. REBT assumes that people are both “inherently rational and irrational, sensible and crazy” unless a new way of thinking is learned (Weinrach, 1980). The theory believes that human emotions stem from our belief, evaluation, interpretation and reactions to life situation. Therefore, counselors use ABCDE technique where clients are taught how to change their negative perception towards an event in a more rational and positive way. Albert Ellis used an “ABCDE” mnemonic or memory system to teach the basics of rational-emotive behavior therapy. The ABCDE stands for:

A = Activating event. B = Beliefs (IBs & RBs).
C = Consequences of B. D = Rational Debate of B.
E = Effective/expected new behaviors (new emotion and new actions).

The concepts of ABCDE techniques can be difficult to explain to clients or students. Using only verbal descriptions can take time for the clients or students to comprehend the concepts. The counseling/teaching tools are transformation from theory to practical products. Instead of using traditional method of chalk and talk to explain the concepts, lecturers or counselors can use the tools to show the sequence of steps from A to E. Therefore, the counselling/teaching tools will make learning the technique more fun, easy to understand, and take less time to comprehend.

There are three objectives of this study: (1) to find out whether the concept of ABCDE is difficult to explain and understand, (2) to determine if there is a need to develop the counselling/teaching tools for ABCDE technique, and (3) to explore the marketability of the counselling tools.

Methodology - Two groups of target users of the counseling tools were identified: (1) counselors and (2) students. A total of 87 full-time practicing counselors working in schools and various agencies, as well as 31 students undertaking Introduction to Guidance and Counselling course participated in this study. Two different sets of questionnaire were developed and distributed to the counselors and students through online survey.

Findings - The findings can be divided into three parts based on the research questions. First, responses from the counselors revealed that 42% of them agreed that it is difficult to explain the concept of ABCDE to the clients and 51% of the counselors stated that the concept of ABCDE is difficult to understand by the clients. Responses from the students revealed that 23% of them agreed that the concept of ABCDE was difficult to learn, meanwhile 32% of the students disclosed that it was quite difficult to learn. Second, the findings discovered that 54% of the counselors felt that it was a very good effort to develop the counseling tools, whereby 41% of them felt that it was a good effort. Moreover, 89% of the counselors affirmed that the counseling tools would be very useful and beneficial to be used during the counseling session. As for the students, 97% of them agreed that the counseling tools would be very useful and beneficial to be used during teaching and learning in the classroom to help demonstrate the technique. Finally, 41% of the counselors mentioned that they will definitely buy the counseling tools if they are available on the market and 48% of them asserted that maybe they will buy them.

Keywords: Rational emotive behavioral therapy, ABCDE technique, counselling tools.

CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusion that can be derived from this study is that there is definitely a need to develop counseling/teaching tools aimed at explaining the concept of ABCDE to the clients or students in order to improve the effectiveness of the counseling/teaching session. The results from the questionnaires indicate that both counselors and the students agreed that the concept was difficult to explain and understand. Majority of the respondents also believed that such counseling tools would be very useful and beneficial to be used during the counseling/teaching session. The counseling tools would help the counselors as well as lecturers who teach REBT approach to demonstrate the concept of ABCDE in a fun, innovative and interactive way of engaging clients/students by combining pedagogy and entertainment. Students also mentioned that it took quite a long time for them to understand the concept taught by their lecturer. Therefore, the usage of the counseling tools in teaching and learning will help educators to teach the concept faster and easier. The tools will also speed up the counseling process as it is easier for the clients to grasp the concept. Apart from that, students or clients can also practice using the tools to increase their understanding of the technique.

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